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**Bureau of Land Management - Colorado**



**March 16, 2010**

## **BLM in the Spotlight**

### **The Facts on Geothermal on Public Lands in Colorado**

**By Vanessa Delgado, Public Affairs Specialist**

Geothermal energy is among the many renewable energy resources drawing attention within the Bureau of Land Management in Colorado.

And while we don't have any geothermal plants to speak of on Colorado's public lands, we do have three nominations for geothermal parcels. The process for what geothermal energy looks like along the Western Slope will be new territory for the BLM and will require involvement from the public and our partners.

Two of the nominated parcels include nearly 9,000 acres of mostly BLM and U.S. Forest Service lands in southeastern Gunnison County near Tomichi Dome and the Waunita Hot Springs. The other parcel includes 3,511 acres of split estate lands in Buena Vista near the Princeton Springs area.

The Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests and the BLM Gunnison Field Office are currently seeking public comments to address whether geothermal leasing is appropriate for the two nominated parcels in Gunnison. The BLM Colorado State Office deferred leasing

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the parcel in the Buena Vista area in February to allow more time to conduct further environmental review and analysis.

Typically, a company will nominate a parcel they think holds potential for geothermal development. Geothermal potential can be determined in a number of ways including; drilling, the existence of hot/warm springs, volcanic activity, geysers, trace elements associated with geothermal activity, or simply flying over an area during winter or spring to see where the snow may be thinner than surrounding areas.

If the BLM determines that geothermal leasing is appropriate for the nominated area(s), and a company is awarded a lease through our lease sale, the company will then enter the exploratory phase to determine where the best location is to develop geothermal energy. The BLM will conduct all of the necessary environmental analysis, including additional public scoping, to determine if, and under what conditions, geothermal development may be approved.

As with other subsurface federal minerals, a developer who holds the geothermal lease is required to make a good faith effort to contact the surface owners and reach an agreement regarding surface use. Typically, the acreage needed for any geothermal production plant is dependent on the amount of megawatts the company produces. For instance, a binary geothermal plant generally requires about 1,400 sq. meters per megawatt.

The U.S. Geological Survey estimates between eight and 67 megawatts of energy could be developed from geothermal lands in Colorado by 2038, enough to provide the annual electricity for as many as 25,000 homes. The BLM and U.S. Forest Service lands in Colorado include about 5.8 million acres that are open to geothermal leasing.

For more information about BLM Colorado's geothermal program contact Vanessa Delgado at 303-239-3681.

## Employee Spotlight

### BLM Colorado Welcomes New Associate State Director

John Mehlhoff brings a broad range of experience in public land management to his new position as Associate State Director in Colorado, having served at every level of the BLM (Field, District, State, Washington). In his capacity, he holds the number two leadership position for BLM-Colorado, behind Helen Hankins who is the State Director.

Raised on the family homestead in North Dakota, John earned a degree in Petroleum Engineering from Montana College of Mineral Science and Technology (Montana Tech). He is a career veteran of BLM, with more than 26 years of service. In his position as Field Manager for the Oklahoma BLM Office in Tulsa, he has management responsibility for a three state region (Oklahoma, Texas and Kansas).

Job postings include numerous National Project Teams; Field Manager in Colorado; Legislative Assistant to a U.S. Senator under the Congressional Fellowship program; Staff Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Land and Minerals; Program Lead to BLM's Assistant Director of Energy and Minerals in Washington, D.C.; Platte River Field Office Petroleum Engineer, Wyoming; and Montana State Office Petroleum Engineer.

Mehlhoff says of his opportunity to serve as Colorado's Associate State Director, "This is an extremely fortunate opportunity. I have had excellent assignments in the past, but Colorado has some of the most diverse and challenging issues of anywhere in the country. I am excited to join the Colorado Team."

John is married to Suzanne. They have two daughters, Jessa, 21, and Jade,

## In the News

### [Future may be clear for Dominguez waters \(March 11, 2010\)](#)

- A little more than a year after Congress established the Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Area, state water officials and federal agencies are trying to reach agreement on how best to protect the waters of Big and Little Dominguez Creeks within the NCA boundaries.

### [BLM: Leave trails, roads for dry spell \(March 10, 2010\)](#)

- This week, instead of the usual Outside Connection in which we offer free or low-cost events to do and activities to share, we have something you shouldn't do.

### [Artifact cases won't be stalled \(March 9, 2010\)](#)

SALT LAKE CITY - Federal prosecutors in Utah said Monday that despite the death of an undercover informant, they'll move ahead with cases against more than 20 people charged after a long-running artifacts looting investigation.

### [Wild horses flock to small Wyo. town, but could be sent east \(March 8, 2010\)](#)

- GREEN RIVER, Wyo. - They're considered an American icon and a symbol of the West. But very soon, thousands of wild horses could be moving east.

### [Why Ken Salazar Is Optimistic About the Sage Grouse \(March 8, 2010\)](#)

- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has announced that, for the time being, other species are more in need of a spot on the endangered species list than the sage grouse, meaning development of the West's wind and oil industries can continue largely unfettered (via The Associated Press).

### [Wind turbines sought along I-70 stretch \(March 5, 2010\)](#)

- A Littleton energy company hopes to put 40 wind turbines atop the windy ridges towering over Interstate 70 between Georgetown and Idaho Springs by 2013 or 2014.

### [BLM Ranger of the Year named; praised for mobile computer effort \(March 5, 2010\)](#)

- Bureau of Land Management law enforcement ranger Erik Boik of Grand Junction recently was named the agency's 2009 National

19. He enjoys fly fishing, golf, and hunting in his free time.

## Ask BLM

How many BLM wild horse herd management areas are in Colorado?

Four: Piceance/East Douglas, Little Book Cliffs, Sandwash Basin, and Spring Creek Basin

If you have something you want to learn about, "Ask BLM" at [Colorado\\_News@blm.gov](mailto:Colorado_News@blm.gov)



## Places to Visit

### Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area

Located along the 150-mile stretch of the Arkansas River from Leadville to Lake Pueblo, the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area (AHRA) is one of the most popular river-rafting spots in the United States and provides some of the best fishing in Colorado. The spectacular scenery is highlighted by rocky canyons that provide excellent opportunities to view Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep. There are 28 developed river-access areas. Popular activities include rockhounding at Ruby Mountain, fishing for brown trout at Hecla Junction, and wildlife-watching at the Five Points Watchable Wildlife Area in Bighorn Sheep Canyon. The

Ranger of the Year.

## Recent Press Releases

- [BLM Royal Gorge Field Manager Announced \(3/16/10\)](#)
- [Colorado State Office Posts List of Proposed Parcels for Upcoming Oil and Gas Lease Sale \(3/12/10\)](#)
- [BLM to hold New Elk Coal Lease public hearing \(3/15/10\)](#)
- [John Mehlhoff named BLM Colorado Associate State Director \(3/11/10\)](#)
- [BLM, USFS plan two burns south of Silt \(3/09/10\)](#)
- [BLM Issues Advisory for Muddy Roads and Trails \(3/05/10\)](#)
- [BLM Uncompahgre Extends Public Scoping for Resource Management Plan Revision \(3/03/10\)](#)
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- [BLM seeks public comments on two natural gas wells near Hartsel \(3/03/10\)](#)
- 
- [BLM Uncompahgre Accepting Comments on Special Recreation Permits \(3/03/10\)](#)
- [BLM seeks comment on commercial recreation permit application \(3/03/10\)](#)
- 
- [Federal Agencies to Consider Geothermal Leases Near Gunnison \(3/03/10\)](#)
- 
- [BLM Colorado Ranger Honored As 2009 National Ranger of the Year \(3/02/10\)](#)
- [BLM Uncompahgre Releases Proposed Travel Planning Decision \(2/26/10\)](#)
- [BLM Colorado State Director Helen Hankins Sworn In](#)

area is jointly managed by BLM and the Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation.

### Directions

The AHRA extends about 150 miles from Leadville to Lake Pueblo through the towns of Buena Vista (about 35 miles south of Leadville on U.S. Highway 24), Salida (about 100 miles west of Pueblo on U.S. Highway 50), Cañon City (43 miles west of Pueblo on U.S. Highway 50), and Florence (35 miles west of Pueblo at the intersection of State Highways 67 and 115).

### Camping

Camping fees are charged at all sites. Those sites include:

#### Railroad

Bridge: From U.S. Highway 24 in Buena Vista, turn east at the only stoplight in town and then travel two blocks past the railroad tracks to N. Colorado Avenue and turn left. This will turn into County Road 371. Travel 6.2 miles to the campground.

#### Ruby

#### Mountain:

From Buena Vista, travel south on U.S. Highway 285 about six miles to County Road 301. Turn east toward the river on County Road 301. Go across the river to the end of the pavement and turn right onto County Road 300. Drive 2.4 miles to the campground.

#### Hecla

#### Junction:

From Salida, travel north on State Highway 291 for about seven miles to the intersection with U.S. Highway 285. Turn north on Highway 285, and travel about 1 mile to County Road 194. Turn east on County Road 194 and go 2.4 miles to the campground.

Rincon: Off U.S. Highway 50, about eight miles east of Salida.

Five Points: Off U.S. Highway 50, about 22 miles west of Cañon City.

[\(2/26/10\)](#)

Vallie

Bridge: Located about 14 miles east of Salida off U.S. Highway 50 on the north side of the river.

### Contact Information

Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area  
307 W. Sackett Ave  
Salida, CO 81201  
Tel: (719) 539-7289  
[www.parks.state.co.us](http://www.parks.state.co.us)

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